

# BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

## What to Consider and How to Improve



- ✦ Focusing on Strengths, increases Engagement.

Engagement links to  
*Productivity.*

# The Cost of Low Productivity in Business

A 2012 report conducted by Ernst & Young Oceania advisory leader Neil Plumridge revealed that *one in three people let their work team down due to low productivity*, with the actual costs to Australian business resulting in *\$40 billion* in wasted time.

Similarly, the PricewaterhouseCoopers 15th Annual Global CEO Survey, 2012 **identified that talent shortages and mismatches were having a serious impact on profitability levels within organisations**. One in four CEOs said they were *unable to pursue a market opportunity or had to cancel or delay a strategic initiative because of talent challenges within their organisation*.

In 2015, the PwC 18th Annual Global CEO Survey revealed that one of the biggest headaches facing CEOs is ensuring that their organisation has the right people to focus on future workplace changes.

Moving forward to 2016, author Dr Lindsay McMillan OAM released the 'Snapshot of the Australian Workplace' (produced by Barna Research for Reventure Ltd).

This report surveyed 1,001 Australians and made some interesting observations about time spent working at maximum productivity.

- Only 43% of employed adults think they are working at their peak performance level the majority of the time (80–100% of the time).
- Women are more likely to report working at the highest performance level as opposed to men (48% vs. 39%)
- Boomers claim the highest performance level (55%) in comparison to younger generations. Millennials claim the lowest time spent at maximum performance (35%)
- Half of the workers admit that some workdays “don't really get my maximum effort,” while a third find themselves often getting distracted at work.

Since then not much has changed. In January 2019, an Emerging Risks Survey was published by Gartner, the world's leading research and advisory company. The survey showed that global talent shortage is now the major emerging risk that organisations face. In the previous emerging risks survey, talent shortage was ranked at third place.

Sourcing people from overseas could be an option for some firms. Being able to appreciate candidates' underlying strengths that drive their attitude and behaviour before conducting interviews is a simple and effective strategy that introduces greater certainty into the equation.

# Link Between Engagement and Productivity

Dr Martin Seligman (who is commonly recognised as the founder of Positive Psychology), has undertaken extensive research within the corporate sector which demonstrated that *there is an indisputable link between engagement and productivity.*

Consider the following questions in order to determine your engagement levels:

- How many of your daily work activities do you really enjoy?
- How much do you enjoy the people you are surrounded by?
- Do your leaders and peers treat you with respect?
- Is your business growing and does it have an optimistic culture?
- Is there an opportunity for you to develop and grow?
- What motivates you to achieve more?
- If money and time were not an issue, how would you be spending your day?
- How often are you in 'flow'\*

\*The term 'flow' has its origins in the field of positive psychology and was first identified by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. He described flow as being a highly focused mental state where you are fully immersed in a feeling of energised attention, with full enjoyment and absorption in the activity which, in turn, results in hours passing by while seeming as though it had only been minutes.

## **Sales Consultant : Salary \$50k + Super + unlimited incentives - Productivity Audit (Case Study)**

*Following six months of no sales, the CEO of XYZ organisation decided to conduct an audit of the strengths of their newest sales team member. His high energy levels and optimism were contagious. The CEO and rest of the team had been very happy with the verbal projections of this very likeable salesperson and were caught up in his enthusiasm.*

*The Strengths Audit revealed that his high optimism level (Score 8/10) and high energy level (Score 8/10) were driving excitement and enthusiasm within his work environment. However, a Productivity Score of 3/10 pointed to the fact that his internal strengths DNA were falling short and that he did not have an inner ability to strategise the steps, systems and procedures required to achieve the necessary outcomes in his role.*

*In response to these findings the CEO changed his role from sales to marketing with the hope that a new approach would work. After another seven months with no results, the CEO was forced to let the employee go.. Resulting in costs to the organisation: \$59,312.50 + Training, Disruption and Lost Opportunities. An expensive lesson that could have been avoided because 'hope' isn't a great business strategy.*

# Respect in the Workplace

The way in which people are treated at work makes a considerable difference to the bottom line of any business. People exposed to rudeness or bullying will produce considerably less than those treated with respect.

AN investigative report by Shari Mimis on Channel Nine's current affair advised that 2019 Data reveals that bullying in schools is a national crisis, with 59% of Australian school students being victims. Bullies in school often become bullies in the workplace which, in turn, has disastrous consequences for business. For instance, Cisco has conservatively estimated that incivility in the workplace was costing them \$12 million annually.

Studies conducted by leadership researcher and author of *Mastering Civility* Christine Porath demonstrate that incivility in the workplace is bad for business. This type of behaviour can take many different forms such as belittling or bullying someone, telling offensive jokes, offensive language or texting when someone is talking.

According to Porath's research, when a boss or leader was disrespectful to employees:

- 66% of them cut back on their efforts
- 80% of them lost work time
- 12% of them left their job.

Not only was the motivation of people who experienced incivility or bullying in the workplace affected, those people who witnessed this happening were also affected ... and quite significantly. Studies conducted with small groups showed a reduction in performance of 25% and 45% less ideas being put forward.

Why would anyone behave in this way? Especially if it was their business and their profits were being eroded? The initial answer is stress; when people feel overwhelmed and their programming creates this type of negative behaviour. The second main reason is because they are concerned about appearing too nice. that this could be perceived as weak and others could take advantage.

In-depth research by Morgan McCall and Michael Lombardo from the Centre for Creative Leadership found that the number one reason for managerial failure was a bullying, rude and inconsiderate style of communication.

Being civil, compassionate and kind in the workplace leads to loyal staff who have your back. Small things such as smiling at your employees, knowing their names and being present when someone is speaking to you, all contribute to people feeling heard and valued.

# Civility in the workplace pays

What do people want from their leaders in the workplace? Data gathered from 20,000 employees worldwide discovered the number one answer was respect. Add to this acknowledgement and appreciation and you have a team who are healthier, far more engaged and more likely to stay long term.

There may still be strong opinions and disagreements, yet you can ensure that you deal with conflict civilly, with respect for other people's opinions so that they feel valued.

Instead of reacting harshly, a civil response would be "I respect your opinion and ...." or "I appreciate the points raised and ....."

People who are civil are viewed as being powerful and important and are more likely to be considered as true leaders.

Leaders can choose to lift people up or put people down. What must be taken into consideration is that a decision to behave in an uncivil manner, will not only make staff less likely to give their best effort, it will have an impact on a business' productivity and profitability.

Most company directors and executives are aware that improving productivity levels is a key priority for any business. While there may already be a variety of initiatives in place in order to improve productivity (including people engagement programs) what generally isn't available are initiatives that measure individual productivity levels to identify the underlying drivers and how these concepts correlate to engagement.

***It is important to bear in mind that all signature strengths should be deliberated. Everything is interrelated and should be taken into consideration.***

# Productivity Scores

## Case Study - Customer Service Manager or BDM?

In our own situation, we recruited a great Customer Service Manager (based on scores of 9/10 for productivity and 7/10 for optimism) for one of our clients. This person excelled in the role for two years after which sales diminished. He then completed another profile survey and we discovered that his scores had dropped to 5/10 for productivity and 4/10 for optimism. Originally, he had been employed in a 'Farmer' capacity to take care of current clients and to upsell and cross sell – tasks which he really enjoyed. Because he was great in this role, it was assumed he would be a great BDM and bring in new clients. However, while he was suited to a 'Farmer' role he wasn't a good fit for a 'Hunter' role and so sales dropped. Consequently, we suggested that he be reinstated to his original role and, sure enough, sales began to flow again.

## Productivity is measured with a range of scores from 0 to 10.

### Productivity Scores 0–4

What to consider:

- A low productivity score may be an indication that you are currently between roles.
- It could also mean that you do not like tasks or responsibilities in your current role. What percentage of tasks do you find enjoyable? Where do you excel?
- A lack of experience can lead to a low productivity score. This is often the case with younger employees.
- If you are in a leadership position, you may be spreading yourself too thin or delegating most of your work. You may be taking some time out or you are working in a new role, with much to learn and take on board.

### Productivity Scores 5–7

These productivity scores have a focus on 'growth and development' and provoke the following questions:

- What am I doing in my role currently which I know to be productive?
- What do I need to let go of?
- What is my motivation to achieve more?
- How would increasing my productivity levels be an advantage in my role and for my life's purpose?
- How can I create more opportunity to develop and grow in this role?
- Who do I need to collaborate with to create a more powerful and productive outcome?
- Which aspects of my work am I passionate about or enjoy most?

# Productivity Scores

## Warren Buffet Technique

American business magnate, investor, speaker and philanthropist Warren Buffet recommends using the 5/25 technique to uncover your truest passion. Make a list of 25 items you care about the most and then put this list in order (with 1 being the item you care about most and 25 being the least). Next, cross out the bottom 20 items. The top 5 items will be your true passions. The other 20 items you crossed out are merely distractions.

We are bombarded with information daily and sometimes it can be difficult to sort out what is important and urgent from everything else. The Important/Urgent Matrix devised by Steven Covey can help you with this process.

**Important – Urgent**

**Important – Not Urgent**

?

**Not Important – Urgent**

**Not Important – Not Urgent**

Source: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey

(I suggest you Google to find some great examples of how to apply this matrix concept to your own situation).

## Productivity Scores 8–10

These productivity scores indicate that you derive great satisfaction from being able to complete tasks on time or before time.

Are you able to share your processes, steps and systems with others, who may not yet have had the opportunity to develop this internal strength process and would benefit greatly from your input? People with high productivity scores may wish to consider mentoring others and share their daily habits that keep them on track.

# Productivity Scores

## Examples of guidelines that people with high productivity levels follow include:

### FOCUS ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT.

Live by the 80/20 rule/Pareto principle which states that 80% of results come from 20% of causes.

### HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS.

Being civil, compassionate and kind. Recognise that there is no justification for being rude or unkind.

### DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH STRESS.

Understanding the negative effects that stress causes; recognise the source and immediately taking steps to neutralise it.

### IGNORE DISTRACTIONS.

Unnecessary phone conversation or Internet scanning, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, or people who waste your time and drain your energy.

### DETERMINE WHEN YOU ARE MOST PRODUCTIVE.

Are you an early morning person? Aim to do critical work and develop strategies when you are at your best.

### NEVER EAT AT YOUR DESK WHEN WORKING.

Take regular breaks. Go for a walk. Get moving to feel energised. (Yield decreases over time when you don't take any breaks)

### DELEGATE.

Give all the work you keep putting off to someone who will relish the task!

Review your scores. High scores areas indicate dominant subconscious strengths. This is where you could spend your time to grow and develop your skills and talents even further.



# Prioritise sub-conscious strengths

## Focus on Engagement

According to research conducted by Gallup, when the leadership team within an organisation fails to focus on the individual subconscious strengths of their people, only about *9% of employees become engaged*. However, when leadership decides to prioritise the subconscious strengths of employees, the level of engagement rises to *almost 73%*.

The very foundation of the profiling survey is to offer insights to people so that they will have the resources to work to their subconscious strengths which, in turn, will create high engagement and enjoyment.

John C Maxwell is a mentor to master coaches like Anthony Robbins. His advice is to focus 70% of your time on developing your strengths to their fullest potential. Of your remaining time, 25% should be spent on learning new things which leaves 5% to spend on your areas of weakness. Maxwell states that it is preferable to minimise your weaknesses as much as possible.

**Developed from the research of three eminent Psychologists, including Dr. Martin Seligman, Author 'Learned Optimism'. Profiling the Signature Strengths of your team, means you gain unique insights into individual team members. This benchmark of success traits is then used to find more successful people and to improve team productivity.**

## Next Steps:

**Sales Team Strengths Audit.** Benchmark Signature Strengths of Champion Salespeople and use their scores to find similar people for more certainty when hiring. High productivity and high optimism scores are crucial for sales roles and for cold calling, look for low kinesthetic scores for a successful combination.

**Create an Ideal Roles Model Benchmark of all key roles.** Resolve staff frustrations quickly and improve engagement. Understand if candidates are likely to meet your expectations, *before you interview*.

**Management and Staff Signature Strengths Profiling.** For improved business productivity and more effective communication with staff and clients. Understand how you deal with challenges, how effectively you communicate, your strengths levels and how to improve.

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